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QUIET TALKS WITH THE FAMILY

BY

CHARLES EDWARD JEFFERSON

Pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle Church in New York

NEW YORK

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

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THE FAMILY IN MODERN LIFE

"To the church in thy house."

PHILEMON 2.

QUIET TALKS WITH THE FAMILY

I

THE FAMILY IN MODERN LIFE

Paul could not write to his friend Philemon without sending greetings to the other christians who were in the habit of meeting for christian worship beneath his roof. We learn from his letter to the Romans that Prisca and Aquila also had a church in their house, and no doubt in every city in which the christian religion had taken root, homes were thrown open for the use of believers. Throughout the first century and the second also, there were no special buildings for churches. Christian worship was carried

on in private homes. Christianity was a religion without a temple: This was a constant amazement to the Pagan world.

We cannot afford to forget that our religion was cradled in the home. It was fitting that for two hundred years it should possess no ecclesiastical edifices. Its strength lies not in ritual or definition, but in the virtues and graces which blossom within the family circle. The greater part of Jesus' life was spent in a humble home in Nazareth. He was always a home lover. He never founded a home of his own, because the character of his mission denied him this privilege. This sacrifice was one of the ingredients in the bitter cup which his Father gave him to drink. He was a man of sorrows, and possibly the greatest of them all was that he had no home. But he prized homes. His first miracle was per-

formed at a marriage in Cana. He reverenced women. He loved children. He reveled in the quiet and refreshing which a home affords. Some of his greatest words were spoken at the dinner table. It was at the dinner table that he instituted the greatest of his sacraments. Many of his illustrations are taken from the home. He loved to use the dialect of blood relationship. In the family he saw a picture of the Kingdom of God. His favorite word for the Eternal was Father, his favorite word for man in his relation to God was son, and in his relation to his fellow-men, brother. So long as Jesus lived, his followers were called "Disciples," but after the Resurrection, they were known as "Brethren." In Jesus' thought the family becomes transfigured. His teaching is domestic. His greatest parable pictures the experience of

a father and his son. His theology is parental. He covers all human experience by the relations of the family. He interprets the universe in terms of the home. This world is one room, and the next world is another room in his Father's house. He throws round everything the warm atmosphere of family life. He introduces us to life eternal by deepening and extending the family affections.

The christian church, then, comes out of the family, so also does the state, so also does society, so does the whole world. The family is the basis of everything. Upon it all other institutions rest. The family is the tree of life. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations. The family is the central fountain. Out of it all the streams of life flow. We must guard it, then, with all diligence. The character of civilization is

The King's Library

determined by the character of the domestic life of the people. The destiny of humanity depends on the integrity of the family.

The relationship of the home to the church is more vital and intimate than we commonly think. The church is a divine institution, and so also is the home. The church is a religious institution, and so also is the family. Fathers and mothers are ministers of God, as truly ordained by him as are pastors and priests. Upon their fidelity the success of priest and pastor largely depends. The clergyman can do no mighty work, unless he has the assistance of the parent. Whatever degrades the home life, brings down the tone of the life of the church. A father can by his example do more for his sons than the preacher can by his sermons. A mother can do more by her instructions and

her spirit than the entire staff of church workers.

The minister of the gospel is handicapped at every step in his work by the obstacles thrown in his way by worldly and godless homes. How can the church hope to secure the attendance of boys and girls at her services if their parents are indifferent to the claims of religion? Even if such children can be induced to come into the church, they bear in their character the marks of defective training. One never completely recovers from the neglect which he suffered in the days of his youth. Many members of the christian church are incurably crippled because they grew up in homes in which spiritual culture was neglected. There was no insistence in the home on swift and glad obedience, and so the principle of obedience remains an unmastered lesson to the

end of the chapter. There was no subordination of self to others in the home, and to learn to do this in later years is almost impossible. There were no high ideals in the home, kindling noble aspirations, and the habit of looking up was not formed in the plastic years when the soul is easily trained to look to the hills. The standards in the home were not christian, but pagan, and the children, now grown men and women, although nominal members of the church, are in reality nothing more than baptized heathen. The world is constantly expressing disgust at the laziness and selfishness of church members, and it is often assumed that all their moral delinquencies are due to the incompetency or unfaithfulness of the ordained officials of religion. It is in the unkempt and worldly life of the home, that we are to find the explanation

of most of the sins and failures of the christian church.

The home is a school founded by the Almighty for the discipline and development of human beings. In this school are given the first opportunities to bend the will to the will of God, to set the affections on things that are lovely and of good report, and to bring the entire life into conformity to the wish of our Creator. It is here that we must learn to do the things which God wants accomplished. It is here that we are to practice the principles announced by Jesus, and to perfect ourselves in the finest of all arts—the art of living together. The church simply lays hold of the processes begun in the home and carries them into wider spheres. It teaches us to love all men—but how can we do this if we have not first been trained to love those with whom

we come in contact within our own family circle? The church teaches us to serve all men, but we are not able to do this unless we have had much practice in the family. The church teaches us to sacrifice ourself, and to lay down our life for others, but this is of course impossible unless in the home we have formed the habit of doing it. The dispositions which work havoc in business and society are dispositions that ought to be killed in the home. The tempers which fill the world with tumult and sorrow grow to the giants under the shelter of family life. In every house there should be a church.

Our generation is in special need of the blessings which a christian home bestows. The modern world is more and more a huge machine. Its wheels turn everlastingly. The elaborateness of the mechanism has a

tendency to make all life mechanical. We need sorely a deepening of the affections. To keep the world from becoming gray and chill, we must lift home life to a higher power. It is an age of commercialism. We talk in terms of the dollar. Men are buying and selling with a fury unprecedented. We need more heart. It is an age of publicity. We live in the glare of incandescent lamps. We need the retirement and subdued light of the home. It is a time of strenuous activity. Men rush through the weeks breathlessly. There are many fagged nerves and jaded hearts. We need the reviving influences of home. It is an age of conflict and tumult. The air is filled with discords. We need the peace of the home. To create the feeling of summer in the air, there is nothing like the warmth of the domestic affections, and to

heal the wounds and cure the diseases of the mind and the spirit there is no medicine so efficacious as that of family life vitalized by the mind of Christ. Home life is the one strip of enchanted territory which has been left us in these noisy and prosaic days. To hold on to it, and to resist all who would encroach upon it, should be the ambition of all who wish to keep the world's life vigorous and sweet and pure.

We are frequently reminded that the modern home is seriously threatened. There are those who do not hesitate to affirm that it is doomed. When one considers the number and might of the forces which are working against it, there is indeed excuse for alarm. The play of economic forces has brought the home into a perilous situation. The population of the country is piling itself in gigantic cities, and a large

proportion of the population is obliged to live under conditions which make a wholesome family life difficult if not impossible. When men and women are obliged to live in rented rooms, in dingy tenements on dismal streets, denied in many instances the light of the sun, and the oxygen of uncontaminated air, it is not easy to keep alive the old ideal of home. The system of modern industry is relentless. It drives men and women to their work early in the morning, it sends them home in the evening fagged and worn out. Often the father does not see his children before leaving home in the morning. They are in bed asleep when he returns in the evening. Women by the million are now engaged in gainful occupations. When father and mother both work in the factory or the shop, then does home life become precari-

ous indeed. With parents away at their work all day, while their children are left in a day nursery or school or locked up in a room at home—surely family life has fallen on evil days. At the bottom of society there are mighty forces ceaselessly working to disintegrate the cell of social life out of which the future world must come.

But forces no less destructive are working at the top of society. The rich as well as the poor are subjected to continuous temptation. Wealth, no less than poverty, is an enemy which slays the soul. Plutocracy creates an atmosphere in which the domestic instincts shrivel and the domestic virtues die. Men with vast fortunes become too busy with their investments and speculations to devote time to their children, and women burdened with social re-

sponsibilities have neither the time nor the inclination to give themselves wholeheartedly to their sons and daughters. The multiplication of men's and women's clubs, and the ceaseless round of social engagements, taking men from their homes every evening, and women from their homes every day and evening too, have jeopardized home life in the higher realms of society as seriously as hard work and poverty have imperiled it in the slums. The divorce trial is not confined to the lower strata of society: it flourishes most luxuriantly where society is alleged to be at its highest. The upper circles no less surely than the lower circles slip into hell.

Indeed our whole modern world seems to be at enmity with the normal development of family life. The expensiveness of living causes thousands of men to postpone

marriage unduly, and the same cause makes childless marriages common. A home without a child is a home deprived of that which gives the word home its highest luster. There is nothing so perilous to happy and stable family life as the absence of children. Men and women are created to be parents, and when for any reason they decline parental responsibilities they are maiming not only their own lives but the life of mankind. With no children in the home, it becomes still easier for husband and wife to spend their leisure hours in the ball room, in the theater, or at the card party down town. For many married couples, home has degenerated into a place to eat in and sleep in. It has become simply a house. A horse eats and sleeps in a house and we call it a stable. What shall we call a house in which human beings do nothing but eat

and sleep? Home is a creation of the mind. It takes time to build a home. It is a product of the spirit. It requires self-sacrifice and love to build a home. A house becomes a home when we live in it, read in it, enjoy pictures and music in it, converse in it, and develop in it by intercourse with those we love the higher faculties and powers of the soul. Modern society is cutting down the time available for use in the home. The outside attractions are so fascinating that only men and women of sound hearts and strong wills can resist them.

In the midst of this complex of disintegrating forces, there have sprung up ideas which sundry novelists and dramatists and pseudo philosophers have endeavored to make popular and plausible. We are told that marriage is a temporary contract, that it can be cast aside at the pleasure of either

party, that fidelity in love is a fiction, and that family life as our fathers knew it is decadent and destined to pass away. All this has been set forth with parade of wisdom in many books, but only the gullible are alarmed. Marriage is ordained of God. It is the most sacred of all the sacraments. The home is a divine creation. It is as indestructible as the church or civil government. Family life is a part of the divine order. The stars in their courses all fight for it. The kings of chattering literary coteries, and the rulers of superficial social sets, take counsel together, saying,—"Let us break asunder these matrimonial chains, let us cast these marital obligations from us." But he that sits in the heavens, laughs, he holds them all in derision. By his spirit he points them to Jesus Christ his Son, and asks them to read once more what Christ

has said about a man leaving his father and his mother and cleaving unto his wife.

The only formidable foe which the home has to face is not outside, but within. It is an Unchristian Heart. Domestic troubles arise from selfish dispositions, unruly tempers, untamed appetites and undisciplined wills. Family disasters are inflicted by the winds which blow from the caves of the soul. The so-called Home Problem, then, is at its root a religious problem, and it is only spiritual forces which can solve it. To fix our attention on rules and regulations, legislatures and courts, is to cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter, while the source of the mischief lies within. The home is a divine institution, foundationed on self-forgetting devotion, kept alive by continuous sacrifice, and perfected by faith and hope and love. What the modern home

needs most of all is more old-fashioned religion, the religion of Jesus and his apostles. The present darkness is caused by covering up the Bible under a pile of magazines and newspapers, crowding out family worship by business and pleasure, rolling off the responsibility for teaching children the doctrines of the christian religion upon the shoulders of outside teachers and helpers, and living without God and without hope in the world. The first word to the Family as to the State and the Church is "Repent." The one thing indispensable for all three institutions is the New Heart. To every member of the household Christ says every day: "You must be born anew."

TO FATHERS

"I write unto you, fathers, because . . ."

I John ii: 13.

II

TO FATHERS

THE apostle wrote to fathers who were interested in Jesus Christ. They had a rich store of spiritual experience, and could therefore appreciate the significance of what he had to say. I purpose writing to a larger company of fathers, not only to those who are confessed followers of the Son of God, but also to many who are without spiritual experience, and who care little for the cause of organized Christianity.

It is often assumed that religion is chiefly intended for women. They are the so-called weaker sex, and religion is supposed to be one of their indispensable supports. It is counted axiomatic in certain quarters

that women are naturally more religious than men, probably because they outnumber the men in the churches and are foremost in all forms of church work. Let a man attend to business, and the woman look after the religious interests of the home: this seems to be a division of labor which commends itself to the sound judgment of multitudes of sensible men. It brings a certain sense of relief to many a man to feel that piety is not his forte, and that his religious obligations can be successfully shifted to the shoulders of his wife.

There is no sanction for this, however, in the Bible. The Bible does not seem to be conscious of any native lack of religious capacity in the male sex. It everywhere assumes that men as well as women are naturally religious, and it holds them both

alike to a strict accountability for the way in which they perform their religious duties. Religion, according to the prophets and apostles, is not exclusively a feminine affair. It belongs also to men. The Bible was written by men, and it has a message level to men's needs. Jesus of Nazareth preached chiefly to men, and it was on the shoulders of twelve men that he laid the burden of bringing the world to God.

Religious Shirkers

It is an extraordinary fact that so many American men should be willing to shirk their religious obligations. They do it habitually, and many of them without compunction. Religion to them is merely an elective, and they pass it by without sense of loss. In the days of courtship they may be found in the church, but after the wed-

ding day they attend church less frequently, and by and by drop out altogether. This constitutes for many a woman her first serious domestic problem. She does not know what her duty is. She loves the church, and she also loves her husband. If he prefers to stay at home, she is likely to stay with him. In this way many a woman crucifies her spiritual inclinations and sinks down into the indifference of a worldly life.

The tragedy deepens when children come into the home. The bringing up of a child is a colossal task. Both father and mother are needed for the work. Each has something to contribute which the other cannot give. If either contribution is withheld, the character of the child is marred. The religious education of a child is the most important feature of his bringing up. What

he thinks of God and his relationship to God is of more moment than anything he can learn out of the books at school. No matter how extensive his intellectual culture, his nature is stunted unless his heart has been trained to reverence and adoration and his spirit has been disciplined to obedience to the will and ways of God.

If a child does not receive a religious education in his home, where is he likely to obtain it? If his own father is not interested in this sort of education, or if he rolls the responsibility of imparting religious knowledge upon the shoulders of somebody else, he is recreant to the highest of all parental duties, and must stand condemned before the judgment bar of God.

It is not uncommon for a man to leave the religious education of his children en-

tirely to his wife. This is often done even in cases where the man is professedly religious. A believer himself in the Christian revelation, he makes no effort to impart his faith to his children. It is the mother who teaches the children to pray, who trains them in the reading of the Bible, who encourages them to go to church, and who manifests a solicitude in the development of their religious life. It is a long and difficult, and oftentimes a discouraging, task, even when both father and mother work together at it; but it becomes far more baffling and disheartening when the woman is left to work at it alone. For the example of the father often counts for more, at least with boys, than the precepts of the mother.

The Father's Example

In the earlier years, children can be controlled by their mother; but by and by there comes a time when they begin to note the conduct of the father. No eyes are keener than the eyes of a child. He sees everything the father does; he reflects on what the father does not do. His logic is inexorable. He argues his way to conclusions which cannot be shaken.

If his father does not pray, prayer must be unnecessary. Grown men surely know what is needed. If his father never reads the Bible, then the big book can be dispensed with. Fathers know what books are most worth reading. If he does not go to church, then church attendance is a pastime and not a duty, for men so old and wise as Father is would not neglect

church, if church were of value to them. If he never talks of God or Christ or the Holy Spirit, if he shows no interest in the Bible or church or Christian work the inference is clear and certain that religion is not a vital part of human life. The reasoning of a child is unanswerable. It is not what children are told from time to time but what they see in the lives of their parents from day to day which makes the deepest impression on their characters. A man can pull down by his conduct all that the saintliest woman can build up by her instruction.

But to the Christian fathers also I write. You, too, are in need of admonition. I write only the things which you already know. But repetition is wholesome, and it is a good thing to stir the mind up by way of remembrance. A man in his home

may feel secure from the cold-eyed scrutiny of the world, but if he have children, he is subjected to a gaze almost as piercing as the eyes of God. Is there anything which escapes the eyes of a child? Who is quicker to note inconsistencies, and to detect hypocrisies? A man's piety is no better than that which he displays at home. In every home the judgment seat is set, and he who sits upon it is a little child. A failure to measure up to one's professions is always humiliating, but it becomes altogether galling in the presence of children who look up to us and trust us.

Hypocrisy's Cost

Hypocrisy is always ruinous, but nowhere does it work such frightful havoc as in the home. If the children see that

religion is a coat put on at church and taken off as soon as the front door is shut, then all religion is made to seem to them a show or sham, and they lose confidence in the world's foundations.

One of the mysteries of sin is that many men are better in public than they are within their homes. In the presence of strangers they are courteous, considerate, and obliging, whereas in the home they are selfish, heedless, and boorish. Conduct of which they would be incapable in the presence of business comrades they are addicted to in the presence of their children. Foolish explosions of temper, of which they would be ashamed should a passing stranger glance in and see it, cause them no remorse because they are witnessed by no one but their children.

Church attendance is important, but still

more important is what takes place in the home before and after the hour of public worship. Family prayers are beneficial, provided they are offered in an atmosphere which is kept clean and sweet by the daily practice of the Christian virtues. Christianity never seems so revolting as when its ceremonies are stuck into a life that is habitually pagan. It is the example of the father which the boys copy, and not his professed principles. Many a father has found it impossible to continue his warnings against tobacco with a cigar or pipe in his mouth. It is useless to caution a boy against the insidious danger of alcohol so long as wine is served daily on the table. The reason so much parental instruction comes to nothing is because it is not backed up by a course of consistent living.

Whatever grown folks may be, children are genuine and true. They speak out bluntly the thing that is in them, and allow their feelings to express themselves completely in their acts. If the parents are playing a part, the children are certain to know it. If in the realm of religion father and mother are actors, the very name of religion becomes revolting to the unspoiled youthful heart.

Now in his home a man shows his innermost self in the way he treats his wife. If he is a coarse-grained, selfish boor, his boorishness will come out in his conduct toward her. If he is a Christian gentleman, he will have daily opportunities to prove it in his attitude to her.

Of all the tyrants on earth a tyrannical husband is the most despicable. A man who lords it over a woman, keeping her

painfully conscious of her daily dependence on him, holding all the money in his hand, and doling it out to her in reluctant pittances as though she were a beggar, insulting her by disparaging remarks in the presence of her children, is a man who deserves the whipping-post.

In the treatment of his children, also, the man's innermost soul stands revealed. There are men who do not know how to deal with children, and then make no honest effort to learn. Their entire course of parental conduct is a blunder. In some cases they simply ignore their children, making no effort to enter into companionship with them. In other cases they recognize their existence, but only by way of occasional reprimand or condemnation. If their children do well, no word of commendation is ever forthcoming.

The highest distinction ever conferred upon fatherhood, was conferred by Jesus of Nazareth. When he went in search of a word by which to name the character of the Eternal he chose the word Father. This word, in his judgment, more nearly adequately expresses the nature of the Infinite than any other word in human speech. God is our Father, immeasurably wiser and nobler and more loving than any earthly father can be, and yet fatherhood, as we know it, is the best obtainable symbol by which to picture to our imagination the disposition of God. Fatherhood in the Hebrew race had been so cleansed and ennobled by a long line of faithful and loving fathers that Jesus could take the word Father as the best possible word for suggesting the attitude and character of God. When we are worried about things that

are essential to us, we are to remember that our "Father" is fully conscious of our needs. When we go down into the valley of the shadow, we are to comfort ourselves with the thought that we are in our "Father's house" and that it contains many rooms. Earthly fatherhood gives us insight into the fatherhood of God.

Every man, therefore, who by his life adds luster to the idea of fatherhood, makes it easier for mankind to believe in God. The more beautiful earthly fatherhood becomes, the more attractive seems the fatherhood of God. No sadder letters ever come to a minister than those written by persons who confess that they find no comfort in thinking of God as their father, because of the distressing experiences they had in their childhood home. Their father was unfaithful, or cruel, or repulsive, and

through him the name father has become so stained and degraded that it seems a profanation to apply it to the Creator of mankind. The memories of the early years are so bitter and depressing that even the Lord's Prayer is marred for them by the introduction of the word father. What greater wrong can a man commit on earth than to live such a life before his children, that in after years they shudder at the very thought of calling God their Father?

St. Paul's Exhortation

Let us listen, then, again to Paul's noble exhortation: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it. Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." Husbands still need to be re-

minded that the spirit of self-sacrifice lies at the heart of love. Fathers need to be told again that the child can be so often found fault with that he loses hope of being able to do better.

It is not the mother alone who is to be patient and kind and forbearing. This is the duty of the father also. He is to crucify his overbearing manner and his irascible disposition, and become the affectionate companion of his sons and daughters. He must do more than this. He must bring them up, not simply in the knowledge of arts and sciences, but in the things of the spirit. He must join with his wife in the work of shaping the religious conceptions and purposes of his children. He must educate them in the chastening and admonition which the Son of God prescribes.

What is the greatest fortune a man can leave his children? A bag of gold? No. An honorable name? No. The best of fortunes is a parental example which makes it easy to believe in the fatherly goodness of God. The crowning achievement of a man upon earth is to make the word father so rich in memories and associations, that it brings God nearer to his children and opens for them the gates of heaven.

TO MOTHERS

"All her household are clothed with scarlet."

PROVERBS xxxi: 21.

III

TO MOTHERS

THE man who made the collection of proverbs contained in our Bible included in his volume a sketch of the ideal woman. She is a wife and mother. The Hebrew mind never questioned the fact that married life is the normal life for men and women on this earth, and that a home is incomplete without children. A woman's highest career—so the Hebrew was convinced—lies in the home. She comes to the fullest realization of herself in motherhood. Her supreme work is caring for her family. Her chief jewels are her sons and daughters. The richest contributions she makes to the world are the immortal beings she molds and trains.

This is not only the Hebrew view, it is the human, universal, everlasting view. Whenever this conception is repudiated, the life of society is bound in shallows and in miseries.

The outstanding feature of the woman who looks out on us from the book of Proverbs is her efficiency as a home-maker. It is she by whom the family is nourished. She spreads the table in the presence of her husband and children:

"She giveth food to her household."

She not only feeds her family, she clothes it. She protects it from the weather. She keeps in mind not only its comfort but also its appearance. She makes it brightly beautiful. Her children are a feast to the eyes:

"All her household are clothed with scarlet."

In clothing her children, she does not neglect her own appearance. Having dressed her daughters in scarlet, she does not array herself in drab. She also is beautiful to look at:

"Her clothing is fine linen and purple."

But dress alone does not make a woman. Her adorning must not be "the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel." She must be adorned with the graces of a lovely heart, and her crowning beauty lies in her disposition:

"Strength and dignity are her clothing."

Weakness is not an essential element of womanhood. To be feminine does not mean to be feeble. A woman's strength must possess charm. It must have in it the suggestion of royalty, the distinctive grace of queenliness. Her soul is calm. She is

not agitated by constant fears, nor consumed by petty worries. She faces life with a courageous heart:

"She laugheth at the time to come."

She is neither frivolous nor sarcastic. Her conversation is seasoned with salt. It gives life fresh tonic. She does not talk an infinite deal of nothing, nor does she habitually occupy her mind with trifles. She is as gracious as she is sensible. She does not use words which stab and cut. She is gentle in her speech, and genial and generous in her judgments.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
And the law of kindness is on her tongue.

Industriousness is one of her shining virtues. She is never idle. She looks after her home with a fidelity which never fails. Early and late she gives herself to her calling:

She riseth while it is yet night,
Her lamp goes not out by night.

She has a great work to do, and she does not shirk it. She constantly studies the comfort and happiness of the little kingdom of which she is the anointed queen:

She looketh well to the ways of her household,
And eateth not the bread of idleness.

But her horizon is not formed by the four walls of her home. She owes a debt to the outside world, and pays it. She is not unmindful of the great poverty which lies beyond her door. Her heart goes out in sympathy to those who need her, and her hands give help to those who cannot help themselves:

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor;

Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

The result of it all is that she wins and holds the hearts of her husband and children. She sways them by what she does, and still more by what she is. She is a true woman, and does a true woman's work, and great is her reward:

Her children rise up, and call her blessed;
Her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Nor is her praise confined to those who are nearest to her. Poets and orators, philosophers and sages, unite in eulogizing her. The heart of mankind exclaims,

Give her of the fruit of her hands;
And let her works praise her in the gates.

The Ideal Portrait

What page of the Bible might a woman more profitably keep before her than this

page of the ancient book of Proverbs! Centuries have passed since the portrait was painted, but the colors have not faded, and the world, gazing on it, still exclaims, "This is ideal!"

Fierce is the light which beats upon the modern home. The gaze of the world is fixed upon it. It has been discovered by the scientific students of social problems that nearly all our woes flow from defective homes. Our thorns and thistles are rooted in the family. Our tragedies are largely created by fathers and mothers unequal to their task. It is because family life is what it is that social life is what it is. It is because parents are what they are that children in thousands of instances fall far short of the world's expectations. Fathers are notoriously delinquent, and mothers are by no means guiltless.

Housekeeping is a fine and difficult art, and demands a large and trained intelligence. Thousands of mothers are distressingly ignorant. They do not know the elementary laws of health. They know nothing whatever of hygiene. No wonder they are semi-invalids and bequeath their infirmities to their children. They do not know how to cook, or sew, or keep house. They can do all these things bunglingly, but not superbly. Their ignorance of things psychological matches their ignorance of things physical. They understand neither the body nor the mind of a growing child. They do not know how to feed children, or how to manage them, or how to train them. Such ignorance is unpardonable. We live in a day of schools and books. Information on every department of a woman's work is abundant and within easy

reach. If a home-maker remains ignorant, it is due to intellectual sloth, or lack of ambition to fit herself for the work to which she is called.

Knowledge and Love

But knowledge is not enough. A mother may understand all mysteries and all knowledge, but if she has not love, she is nothing. Strange to say, some mothers seem to be deficient in love. At least their love is not the sort which enables them to lay down their life for others. It is a divine law that only as one loses himself is it possible for him to find himself. Not a few mothers are afraid to lose themselves. They have lofty notions of their social or artistic or literary gifts, and strong ambitions to develop these to the utmost. They begrudge every moment they give to

their children. They hand them over to governesses and nurses, and at the earliest possible moment send them off to boarding school. In this way they rob themselves of that enrichment of affection and discipline of spirit which God has provided for mothers who faithfully perform their duties. They lose also the highest raptures which a mother's heart can know.

Mothers who are unwilling to be bothered by their children, cannot expect their children to know or love them. If in the morning a mother refuses to rise up and serve her sons and daughters, she will find in the afternoon that they will not rise up and call her blessed. Many a mother reaches the end of life with a lonely and hungry heart because, when she was young, she was too busy to knit the hearts of her children to her.

It is important that a mother should keep first things first. For instance, the children are first and the house second. The house was built for the children, and not the children created for the house. If the carpets are more precious than the little feet which scamper over them, then later on the children are likely to be in the street. Some women's thoughts seem to revolve everlastingly around a dust pan and a mop.

First the body, and then the raiment. If the dress is put first, then the health is certain to suffer. The joy of living fades out as soon as life becomes a constant struggle with milliners and dressmakers.

First, the life, and then the meat. If the serving of victuals is given precedence over the things of the spirit, then life is

in danger of becoming a haggard worry over silver spoons and dishes, tablecloths and napkins.

First God, and then man. If man is placed first, then the child forms the fatal habit of listening to men rather than to God. A child's attitude to the Eternal is determined in most cases largely by the attitude of his mother. If God is a real power in her life, the children all know it.

Christian in Name Only

There are many mothers who are Christian only in name. Their attitude to life is altogether worldly. Conventionality is their God. They take their standards not from the New Testament, but from society. Their conception of work is pagan, and their idea of marriage is that of a heathen. In the presence of their daugh-

ters, they constantly rank men according to their wealth. They speak enthusiastically of "a good match," when the bridegroom is a fop or a roué, and declare that a girl has "done well," when she has bound herself to a man whom it is certain she can never love.

When the secret causes of the innumerable domestic tragedies of our time are laid bare, who knows but that foolish mothers will be found to be the chief culprits? They will stand condemned at the judgment because they never taught their daughters what marriage is. They gave them false ideas of men. They never trained them in the rudiments of household work. Many a woman, amid the heartache of later years, remembers with bitter resentment her mother's inexcusable and tragic neglect.

A mother has a mighty influence in shaping the views not only of her daughters, but also of her sons. One of the reasons why Europe is to-day deluged with blood is because the mothers of Christendom have been recreant to their duty. They have been hoodwinked by the sophistries of men into the notion that war is something inevitable, and even glorious. War is, in fact, an ancient atrocity which would have been long ago banished from Christendom had Christian women only been true to their finest instincts.

Men will never hate war as it deserves to be hated until mothers breathe into their children an inextinguishable abhorrence of the inhuman abomination of settling disputes by butchering men. The time has come for women to cease to condone or to tolerate such savagery. For ages they

have suffered in silence and have been content to bind up the wounds of the poor bodies which cruel war has mangled, but a new day is dawning.

A Great Soul, a Noble Heart

But more important than anything that the mother does or says, is what she is. She must be a great soul, alert in intellect, noble of heart. Her outlook must be wide and her sympathies generous and warm. To do her best work in the home, a woman needs to keep her eyes on the world. It is possible to devote one's self too exclusively to household cares. The woman who does this degenerates into a drudge. A drudge is never interesting either to herself or to anyone else. The grinding routine of the days will, unless guarded against, leave the spirit jaded. The

endless monotony of commonplace duties is deadening to the higher powers of the soul. Every mother, therefore, needs the influence of the Church. To the Church the field is always the world. No other institution so liberalizes and broadens the mind. The Church stands for service, and it is not service done in a corner, but service carried to the ends of the world. A wise woman is never too busy to take an active interest in movements looking toward the uplift of mankind.

Many a woman is to-day discontented and unhappy for no other reason than that the range of her interests is too contracted. The most vitalizing and charming women in the land are mothers who have taken some great and noble cause into their hearts.

This, then, is essential to the ideal

mother; she must be vital, glad and strong. She must clothe her family with scarlet, and to do this she must herself be clothed with scarlet. She must be radiant. She must wage uncompromising war against worry and fear. These are two demons to be rigorously faced and irretrievably overwhelmed. She must not allow herself to become so cumbered with many cares that she becomes peevish. There is nothing so destructive to the happiness of the home as a fretful and complaining woman. A woman is certain to become morbid and petulant unless she breathes the atmosphere of a large and varied world. She needs multiplied interests and a wide horizon to keep her brave and bright and true. When Paul wanted the Corinthians to give money to the needy Christians in Palestine, he got them to thinking first of the resurrec-

tion of the Son of God and the life eternal. The Hebrew poet made no mistake when he combined in the ideal woman loyalty to home duties and fidelity to outside obligations. The ideal home-maker is the ideal philanthropist. She dresses her family with scarlet, and she reaches forth both hands to the great world which needs her.

TO BOYS AND GIRLS

"One mightier than I."

MARK i:7.

IV

TO BOYS AND GIRLS

"ONE MIGHTIER THAN I." This is what John the Baptist said of Jesus of Nazareth. John was one of the mightiest of men who ever lived, but he knew he was not so powerful as Jesus. Jesus's birthday falls in December. Nearly everybody is now thinking of that day. It is a pity to think of the day without thinking of the man. No Christmas is rightly spent on which we do not think at least for a minute or two of what this man Jesus said and did. No man ever lived a life so beautiful as his. No man ever spoke words so wise as his. No man has so many things to teach us as he. His name is above every

name, for he is the holiest of the mighty, and the mightiest of the holy.

It is not enough to know about him. We ought to try to be like him. By this is not meant that we ought to dress as he dressed, or to do all the things which he did, but that we should have his disposition and think of God and people as he thought. This is by no means easy. We cannot become like him without trying, and trying hard, and trying all the time. It is so hard to be like him that some never try at all. Others try and fail, and are so discouraged that they do not try any more. But still others, when they fail, try again. Trying again is the secret of success in all hard undertakings. Never allow yourself to be conquered by failures. No one can finally fail who perseveres. A Christian is one who keeps on trying to

be like Jesus. Every boy and girl, then, can be a Christian. It is not necessary to wait until one is grown up before he begins to try to be like Jesus. As soon as one makes up his mind to do this, and begins to do it, he has a right to call himself a Christian.

The Most Valuable Book in the World

To become like Jesus one must know what kind of person he was, and to know this one should read the Gospels. The Gospels are four short accounts of Jesus's life, and form the first part of the New Testament. The New Testament is a book which every boy and girl should own. It is the most valuable book in all the world. It has in it many jewels, but its richest treasure is the story of the life of Jesus. This story ought to be read again and

again. To be ignorant of the life of Jesus is not only a pity but a disgrace. A big boy or girl living in a Christian land who does not know what Jesus said and did ought to feel ashamed. Everyone is poor, no matter what else he owns, if he does not own a copy of the New Testament.

According to the Gospels Jesus was a wonderful man, and the most wonderful thing about him was his strength. It was his power which caused his fellow-men to stare and wonder. He was so strong that he drew great crowds to him as though he were a magnet. He did things which no one else could do. Even his words had something in them not to be found in the words of any other teacher. They drove men to do things they had never done before. Even the glance of his eyes was wonderful. One night when some men

came to arrest him he simply turned his eyes on them, and they were so frightened they fell backward to the ground. He was so mighty that men obeyed him just as though he were a king, and they loved him so dearly that they were willing to die for his sake. He had more than the strength of a giant, for no giant of the story books was ever able so to bend the human will and control the human heart as he did.

It does us good to be with those who are true and strong. Some of their soul seems to pass into us. Looking at what they do makes us want to do likewise, and the sight of their example gives us courage. The worst thing about us is our weakness. A large part of the misery of the world is due to feebleness. The weakest thing about us is our will. We

resolve to do something, and do not do it. We make a plan, and fail to carry it out. We are not able to control ourself. Even our tongue often runs away with us. We have a temper, and become its slave. An appetite overpowers us. We form a foolish habit, and have not strength enough to break it. Our companions follow a silly custom, and we are too timid to cast it off. If we were not so weak, we could always do our duty and live up to what we know is right, and obey that little voice within us which is known as conscience. Our only hope of living a life that is simple, brave and true is in keeping our eyes on One who is mightier than we are.

Real Strength

Every boy and girl wants to be physically strong. Not to be able to play as other boys and girls play is counted

a great misfortune. But there are greater misfortunes than this. One may have strong muscles, and a weak will. He may have good legs, and a feeble conscience. His body may be vigorous, and his heart faint. One may be strong as an animal, and feeble as a human being. Many a little invalid is really stronger than his robust companions. No one ought to be thought strong who cannot hold his tongue, or curb his temper, or speak the truth.

Some people have queer notions of Jesus, and of what it means to live a Christian life. They think that Jesus was an innocent, sweet-natured dreamer who did not understand the world and who was too soft to stand up like a man. To be a Christian—so these people think—is to be flabby and weak. Many boys do not want to be a Christian, because they are

not sure that one can be a Christian and still be manly. They think that to be brave one must be a soldier and learn to kill, that to be a hero one must do big things in the public square.

But Jesus was heroic, and the things he did called for a greater amount of courage than he would have needed to lead Cæsar's army. Everything he did was hard, and called for an amount of strength which no one of us possesses. The reason why many persons never become Christians is that they are weak, and the reason there are not more good Christians in the world is that men have not the strength to do the things which Jesus commands his followers to do. Jesus was the bravest, truest, manliest man who ever lived, and as soon as you begin to try to live his life you find that he is mightier than you are.

For instance, Jesus never hated anyone. He had cruel enemies, but he never hated them. Bad men tried to do him harm, and in return he was their friend. To return good for evil is hard. If you do not believe it, try it. To hate requires no effort. To get even with a person who does us wrong is as pleasant as eating Christmas pie. Tit for tat is a game we all like to play. We like it because it is so easy. But Jesus did the difficult thing. He loved his enemies, and did good to those who persecuted him. When men drove nails through his hands and feet he asked God to forgive them.

Because he tried to do good to those who wronged him, it was not possible for him to fight. He never used his fists, or carried a club, or threw stones. He was too manly. Even when he was struck, he

did not strike back. To strike back is easy, and not to strike back is hard. To hold the tongue is more difficult than to speak. To use harsh speech when people make us angry is easier than to give a soft answer. To hold back the fist takes more strength when one is provoked than to make use of it. To fight is the easiest thing a boy can do. But Jesus never fought. He was too strong.

The Greatest Courage

Because he never fought, we are not to think that he never resisted evil. He hated cruelty and falsehood and injustice, and fought them with all his might. He was never afraid to rebuke meanness, no matter where he found it. He did not hesitate to denounce dishonesty in its every form. He never kept still, as many per-

sons do, when lies were spoken in his presence, and he condemned the big men of his country so severely that they seized him and put him to death. If we are ever to become able to do good to those who do us harm, and to help those who try to hurt us, and to resist wrong of every kind, we must look to One who is mightier than we.

Jesus was not afraid of what others said about him. He did not change his plans because someone opposed him. He was strong enough to stand alone. Few of us are. We go with the crowd. This is easy. When we do things which we suspect are not right, we quiet our conscience by saying, "They all do it." We are afraid to be different from others. We do not want to pay the cost. We do not like to be made fun of, and it

hurts us to have people dislike us. A boy who is dared by another boy to do a thing is likely to do it, because he does not want to be considered a coward. But if the thing is either foolish or wrong, then the boy who does it is a coward, for he is afraid of another boy. Jesus was never afraid of anybody. He could do anything which he believed it was right for him to do. He dared to be himself. He believed that it is better to die than to be afraid to do what one knows is right. I do not see how we can ever be strong enough to do our duty, unless we get strength from Someone who is mightier than we are.

Jesus was humble. This does not mean that he felt like a worm, for he never did. It does not mean that he cringed and lay down for everyone to trample on him. To

be humble is to be willing to perform lowly duties. In this sense, Jesus was humble. He liked to think of himself as a servant. On the last night of his life, he took a towel and a basin of water, and bathed the feet of the men who were going out to preach his message. He did not feel that this was a humiliation. He did not think it was beneath his dignity. Nothing was beneath his dignity which needed to be done. Many of us are too vain to be useful. We hold our heads too high. We like to be despots, and have others do our bidding. There is no hope for any of us, unless we get help from One who is mightier than we are.

Of all the virtues, Jesus liked obedience best. He thought that without obedience it is impossible to make progress in life. He often talked about this to his friends.

He knew from experience that it is only by obeying God that we are able to learn what next God wants us to do. Disobedience brings darkness, so that one does not know where to go or what to do. He said one day that doing God's will was the food he lived on, and at the end of his life he was able to say what no other man has ever been able to say, that he always did the things which God wanted him to do.

What Obedience Means

Now, obedience is not a virtue which boys and girls as a rule admire. They think it a nuisance to be compelled to do what someone else wants them to do. They long to grow up so that they shall not be obliged to obey any more. Some of them disobey just as often as they can, for they

think that obedience is a form of weakness, and that it is manly and noble to do always just what one pleases. But this is an error. It is disobedience which is easy, and it is obedience which is hard. Obedience is bending the will to a will higher than one's own. To do this requires strength. Anybody can be willful, and follow his own impulses; but only he who is strong can obey. Obedience lights up a home like a lamp. Disobedience darkens and chills like a November fog. Boys and girls who want to take lessons in the art of obedience must look to One who is mightier than they.

Because Jesus was gentle and tender we must not imagine he was soft. Because he was kind and forgiving it does not follow he was weak. When men tried to induce him to do wrong he was as unyield-

ing as rock, and when he was faced by his foes he was as bold as a lion. He was the strongest man who has ever lived upon our earth. He never faltered; never whimpered; never compromised, and never ran away. He never told a lie. He never knew what it was to be afraid. No king on earth was powerful enough to hold him back from doing what he felt he ought to do, and not all the armies of the Roman Empire could have forced him to do a thing of which his conscience disapproved. He was tempted just as we are, but he never yielded. He went out of this world a conqueror.

This is why the world cannot forget him. He is the hero of our race. We can never let him go. We need him. We are weak, but he is mighty. To look at him makes us braver. To think of him

adds to our strength. He is mightier than we, and he has promised to help us with his strength. We ought to ask for it every day, especially on Christmas. A great man once declared that he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. Through him we also can conquer.

TO GROWN-UP SONS

"Why do ye transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?"

MATTHEW XV: 3.

V

TO GROWN-UP SONS

Hot indignation burns in the words. Jesus here strikes at one of the most contemptible of all sins—a son's neglect of his parents. It is an eternal law that children shall honor their father and their mother; but, like all other laws of God, it is easily evaded. Men invent excuses for ridding themselves of their filial obligations. They say they have no time, or that they are too poor, or that their parents are unworthy, or that they are attending to matters of greater importance. In Palestine there had grown up a custom of escaping the performance of filial duty under the guise of fidelity to religion. No matter

how needy they might be, the son could free himself of obligation to support them by pronouncing over his money the pious words: "This is dedicated to the Lord!"

Such conduct stirred the heart of Jesus to indignation. To him the filial relation is infinitely sacred. His heart was sensitive to all the laws of God, especially to the law: "Honor thy father, and thy mother." On the cross in his dying hour, it was the welfare of his widowed mother which lay heavy on his heart, and he could not go out of the world until he had provided for her support. In this, as in all things else, he is forever the great example.

But among his countrymen there had grown up the pernicious notion that a man can be true to God and at the same time unfaithful to his parents. The Temple was given an iniquitous precedence. Its needs

were allowed to overtop the needs of a man's father and mother. A man could be considered good, even though he trampled on the fifth commandment. Against all this the soul of Jesus stood up in vehement protest. These were his crushing words to the religious teachers of his day: "You have made void the word of God because of your tradition!"

There are in the world many mischievous traditions which have a tendency to dull the edge of the law of God, and one of them is the tradition that as soon as a boy is grown up he has a right to do as he pleases. Every boy, perhaps, at some time or other in his boyhood, ponders the tradition with delight, and longs for the happy day when he shall be delivered from the yoke of parental authority, and live a life that is free.

Under the inspiration of this tradition many a boy, when full grown, proceeds forthwith to set at naught the law of God. Exulting in this new-found liberty, the young man now proclaims in attitude and action that he is at liberty to do what he will.

A Life-Long Obligation

It is true that to every man there comes at last the day when he must decide all the great questions of life for himself. When he was a child, he bore the yoke as a child; but when he becomes a man, many of the restraints of childhood are laid aside. Parents have no longer the right to command as they once did, and the youth becomes the architect of his own fortune.

But whatever else a grown-up son may be released from, he never outgrows the

obligation of honoring his parents. So long as they live, he owes them a reverence which he owes to no one else. However busy he may be, he owes them some of his time. Whatever may be his attainments, and however exalted his position, the law of God holds him to filial veneration and love.

If the son, having become a man, continues to live under the parental roof, he must not forget that he is in his father's house, and that at many points his father's wish should be considered law. No son, in the twenties or thirties or forties, is justified because of his age in recklessly disregarding the expressed wishes of his parents, and in declaring by his conduct that he will exercise his legal right of doing what he pleases. Attention to the parental voice is beautiful in sons of what-

ever age. Considerateness is always lovely, especially when shown to one's parents. Boorishness is never so ugly as when manifested by grown sons to their father or mother. Little boys can be boisterous and rude without lacerating the hearts of their parents, but when boys become men, they cannot speak harshly to their father or mother without having their words hurt worse than a stab or a blow. A grown son who acts the boor in the home of his parents is a barbarian, however polite he may be in society.

When the son leaves his father's house to make a home of his own, he should take heed lest the bonds which bind him to his parents may be weakened. A wise man has reminded us that we ought to keep our friendships in repair, and what friendship is better worth attention than the friend-

ship between parents and their children? By occasional visits and by regular correspondence a son should keep his heart warm toward the old folks at home. In the list of duties which a man owes to his parents, the practice of writing letters should have a prominent place. Other letters may be postponed, but not this one. Others may be cut short, but never this one. This is the one which is most eagerly awaited and thoroughly enjoyed, and the one which the world can least afford to lose. The time is surely coming when there will be no one at home to read these letters, and until that day arrives let the correspondence go on without interruption. Boys in college often grow negligent at this point. The college tradition in regard to the importance of study and recreation is allowed to set aside the law of God. It is not so im-

portant that a lesson in science or mathematics should be mastered or that a game of football may be won, as it is that a hungry-hearted mother should be satisfied by her son. Big boys do not know the loneliness which mothers feel in those awful years when for the first time there is a vacant place at the table, and no familiar footfall in the hall at evening, because their sons have entered college. It is a solemn time for parents when they realize that the home life has been broken and can never be the same again. There is nothing which will so light up the gloom as a loving letter.

If a son is careless in writing home during his college years, the habit is not likely to be broken. The years become increasingly crowded as we go on in life, and the one excuse which covers all sorts of sin is, "I have no time."

Many a son is for a season faithful in his home correspondence; but after marriage, and the increase of his business cares, he allows his letters to become more and more infrequent, and the parents, as they go down into that valley which runs out toward the sunset, are deprived of one of the supports which God has planned for them.

Some sons do not write at all. They have gone far from home. Their parents do not know where they are. There are fathers and mothers who never go to bed without wondering whether their son is alive or not, and never enter upon a new day without hoping that possibly this may be the day on which the long-expected letter shall arrive. What greater cruelty does this world present than this? If these lines should perchance fall under the eye

of some prodigal who for years has subjected his father and mother to a lingering torture by his failure to let them know where he is, may the Spirit of God touch his heart, and prompt him to send the long-delayed message. There would be rejoicing to-day in a thousand homes, if prodigal sons would only pay one of their debts.

Unreasonable Parents

Some of the most puzzling problems which men must face are created by the attitude of their parents, and not a few of the most distressing tragedies in human life spring out of tangled parental and filial relations. A tragedy is not necessarily the product of conscious sin. It may be the creation of ignorance, or carelessness, or mistaken notions. If sons are sometimes a burden to their parents, so do

parents sometimes tax the patience and good nature of their sons. Fathers and mothers are not always reasonable, and make demands which no son, however devoted, can comply with.

For instance, who is going to decide what a boy's life work shall be? Parents sometimes insist that this is a part of their parental prerogative. They attempt to drive their sons into callings for which they have no taste, and no native aptitude. Many a man is to-day unhappy and defeated, because his self-willed father forced him into a business which he despised. There is a point beyond which no parent should go in attempting to control the career of a son. It is fitting that the father should give the boy the benefit of his counsel, and urge upon him considerations which in his judgment are of weight; but

having done this, there is no more which he can rightfully do. Every youth must decide for himself what shall be his calling. He may make a mistake, but he is not so likely to blunder as his father. No son dishonors his parents by insisting on his right to choose his life work.

Nor is it within the province of parents to select for their son a wife. Many parents are incorrigibly wrong-headed at this point. They assume the right to dictate to their son which girl he ought to fall in love with. This is a form of tyranny which must be unflinchingly resisted. It is for every man to decide for himself who his life partner shall be. The fact that a man is younger than his parents is not proof that they are wiser than he, when it comes to the choosing of a wife. A youth may, indeed, choose the wrong

woman, but he is not so likely to err as his parents. Instinct is often wiser than experience, and a man in the twenties is better fitted to settle certain questions than are men twice or three times his age. It is he and not his parents who are going to live with the bride, and after they have given their advice and had it rejected, they should have the good sense forever afterward to hold their peace. It is distressing to a loyal-hearted son to go contrary in his matrimonial affairs to the expressed wish of his father or mother, but this is a cross which many a son is called to bear. It is not his fault that he bears it. It is laid on him by his crotchety and dictatorial parents.

The Right to Think for Himself

Trouble not infrequently arises because of differences of opinion in politics or religion. Most fathers like to have their sons think as they do on the great questions of life, and when the son refuses to do this, the father is sometimes hurt, and shows his resentment in ugly ways. Now it is an American tradition that every man has a right to think and speak for himself, and because of this tradition, grown-up sons often fail to show decent regard to the views of their parents. Their parents, it may be, are old-fashioned in their religious beliefs. They cling to ideas which the new generation has outgrown. They have views of the Bible, and of the church, and of Sabbath observance which the son cannot hold. And so the grown boy some-

times scoffs at his parents' religion. He takes delight in setting forth what he does not believe. Or if he does not use ridicule he incessantly argues, though he knows that every argument is futile and only inflicts pain. In this case, the tradition of free thought is allowed to make void the law of God. A son has the right to do his own thinking, but it is not his right to ridicule his parents. Nor is it becoming for him to set himself up as an instructor of his parents in religious matters. Freedom of thought belongs to parents as well as to their sons, and even though parents may be mistaken, it must not be forgotten that grown-up children can be mistaken also. Boys, even after they have been four years in college, can be in error at many points.

Even if the parents are wofully bigoted

and superstitious, even then the grown-up son must honor his father and mother by treating with respect those things which to their own hearts are sacred. A son should never be a hypocrite, pretending to accept doctrines which his reason rejects; but sarcasm when poured out on one's parents' religious beliefs is surely the language of the devil, and every son is under bonds to remember that his parents have the same right which he claims for himself—the right to hold doctrines which one believes to be true.

Religious Differences

It not infrequently happens that a boy on reaching manhood does not feel himself at home in his father's church. Some other communion appeals to him and draws him. What shall the son do, remain in the old

church chafing and starving, or go into the other church where there is liberty and bread to spare? The answer is evident. The son must at whatever cost be loyal to the truth as he sees it, and identify himself with that religious body which in his judgment is most faithfully interpreting the religion of Christ, and which will give him the largest opportunity to become the man God wants him to be. No son really dishonors his parents who honestly strives to do that which is right.

This is the end, then, of the matter? The grown-up son, however tall, must never look down upon his parents. If he laughs at their ignorance, he gives proof that he himself is ignorant of things which he ought to know. However peculiar his parents may be in appearance, and however queer they may be in their ideas, he

should never be ashamed of them. The world is ashamed of a son who is ashamed of his father and mother. As life advances, the infirmities of the body are certain to increase, and not infrequently there develop amusing or provoking idiosyncrasies of the mind, but the dutiful son, drawn only closer to his parents by these foibles and frailties, keeps his heart true to the eternal commandment of God: "Honor thy father and thy mother."

TO GROWN-UP DAUGHTERS

"She hath done what she could."

MARK xiv: 8.

VI

TO GROWN-UP DAUGHTERS

A LITTLE girl has many troubles, but a big girl has more. A girl under twelve has puzzling problems, but a girl in the later teens has problems far more numerous and baffling. One of a big girl's biggest problems is her mother. Her mother is almost certain to be old-fashioned, and out of this old-fashionedness there emerge all sorts of perplexing situations.

During the last thirty years the world has been rushing ahead at a furious pace, and in no section of it has the pace been more rapid than in the domain of women. The feminist movement is world-wide, and nowhere has the tide risen higher than in

our own country. Woman has at last found herself. For ages many doors were closed to her, but now they are open. The new day dawned when women were admitted into the higher institutions of learning.

From that hour events have followed one another in quick succession. The college once opened to a girl, the door of the athletic world was also flung open. Gymnasiums were built for her. She proceeded at once to do stunts which would have shocked her grandmother. She began to play games. She used muscles which all the physicians had said must not be used. She began to revel in out-of-door sports, taking part in boat races and even playing baseball. It was demonstrated that a woman's physical structure does not doom her to a sedentary life, and that feminine

and masculine muscles alike flourish on an abundance of fresh air and vigorous exercise.

With the enlarged knowledge and the fresh physical vigor there came an intense desire to do something—something new and something more. And so women are now doing practically everything which men are doing. Many of the trades are open to them, and all of the professions. They have made for themselves a large place in the world of business, and in all the callings of life they stand side by side with the men. The old régime has passed away; there is a new heavens and a new earth.

New Liberties and Opportunities

Every American girl feels this. She is not willing to be what her grandmother was. She desires to outstrip her mother.

She demands a larger liberty than was dreamed of by the girl of fifty years ago. She has a new viewpoint. Ancient traditions are a weariness to her. She sees life at a new angle, and it is because of this new vision that she and her mother cannot always understand each other. The girl of to-day has swung away from certain ideals of the past, and while the girl is hilarious over her new liberties and opportunities the bewildered mother looks on astonished, wondering what the world is coming to!

This estrangement between mother and daughter is likely to be more fruitful in mischief when the mother is uneducated and the girl has gone to college. College girls are ushered at once into a world of thought and feeling quite different from that in which their mothers live, and in the

atmosphere of this larger world all views are more or less modified, and new ideas are accepted of which their mothers have never heard.

Many a mother has the torturing experience of feeling that her daughter is slowly and surely drifting away from her, and that henceforth she is to dwell in one world while her daughter dwells in another. The mother thinks that her daughter is obsessed, and the daughter gets even by thinking her mother belated. It is indeed a human tragedy when a mother and a daughter, existing under the same roof, find themselves living in entirely different worlds, separated by a chasm so wide that even maternal and filial love cannot span it.

Sometimes it is the will of the father with which the daughter's will comes into most violent collision. The father has old-

fashioned notions. He thinks that a girl ought to stay at home and be content with the domestic career which satisfied the ambition of women of a preceding generation. But his daughter thinks otherwise. She wants a career. She wishes to teach, or to become a nurse or an actress, or a prima donna, or to keep books, or to do the work of a stenographer or typewriter. She counts it unworthy of a modern woman to stay at home, waiting for some man to propose. She longs to plunge into the world, and earn, if not her living, at least her pin-money. Sometimes the father says "No," and the daughter submits. Her heart, however, is full of disappointment and discontent, and the home life is never again what it was. Sometimes the father says "No," and the daughter refuses to obey. In that case, the rela-

tions are not broken, but they are strained. The father feels that not sufficient reverence has been shown him, and the girl cannot entirely escape the sense of self-condemnation.

When the First Suitor Comes

Sometimes it is not till the first suitor appears that domestic tribulation really begins. Many parents are not fond of young men who prowl round seeking wives. They look upon them with suspicion and have eyes keen to their defects. The first man who presents himself is almost certain to be condemned, and if the parents are ultra-fastidious, the second and third and fourth man is likely to meet the same fate.

In fact, some parents are so selfish they do not want their daughters to marry at all. They shrink from the separation and

loneliness which they know the daughter's marriage would bring them, and so, instead of sacrificing themselves for their daughter's happiness, they think only of their own comforts, and are willing to commit one of the very greatest of all wrongs.

A girl is indeed in a distressful situation when in all her courtship she finds herself opposed at every turn by parents who scoff at love as something silly, and who are so abnormally careful of their daughter that they dare not trust her out of their sight. There is nothing that an American girl resents more fiercely than the insult of being treated by her parents as though she were a girl of six.

There are questions which daughters feel they have a right to answer for themselves, and in thinking this they are not mistaken. Every girl in the twenties has

a right to determine what she is going to do with the talents intrusted to her, and while she will listen courteously and patiently to all the counsel which her parents have to offer, and while she will think soberly and long before she ventures to transgress their wishes, nevertheless she must in the end work out her own salvation, answering to God alone for her decision.

And every girl in the twenties who has found a man who has won her heart has the right to marry him, in spite of the opposition of her parents. She should give attentive ear to all they have to say, for parental eyes can see many things which a girl's eyes at twenty do not see, and parental ears can hear things which are not likely to reach the ears of a girl genuinely in love. At critical times, where one

is dealing with matters of high concern, it is wise to move with slow and solemn deliberation. It is a painful experience for any right-minded girl to marry contrary to the wishes of her father and mother, but many a girl has been obliged to take the painful step and has rejoiced all her days that she took it.

The Basis of Every Woman's Life

Every girl should ever hold in her mind marriage as a possibility for her, and should therefore prepare herself for its high and sacred responsibilities. It is easy for a girl to say in a freakish mood that she will never marry, but no girl knows or can know what she is going to do. What the heart will say when the right man appears, no girl can know in advance. A girl may at a certain stage in

her development have no desire for marriage, because of ambitions which have just then completely preoccupied her heart.

But these ambitious are generally short-lived, and may all die out quite suddenly. Ambition for a career is never so deeply rooted as are those home-making instincts which lie at the basis of every woman's life.

Because of the possibility of marriage, the forward-looking girl will not fail to fit herself for the duties of a wife and mother. She will not forget that physical vitality lies at the basis of a woman's charm, and will have an ambition to keep gloriously well. She will train her hands to work. She will learn to cook, and sew, and conduct the affairs of the household. She will be her mother's efficient assistant. It is not right that the daughter should loaf in the parlor while the mother drudges in

the kitchen. A girl is to be judged not by the figure she cuts in society, but by the figure she cuts in the domain of daily household duties. There would be fewer divorce suits if girls did not go in such large numbers to the marriage altar quite unprepared to meet the obligations which lie beyond it.

But a girl cannot nowadays be content to plod along with domestic duties, waiting for some man to make her his wife. She must do what she can to fit herself for married life, should marriage come to her, and she must do what she can to make herself economically independent, should she remain single. Her father may be rich to-day, but riches take wings sometimes and fly away. It is wise to be prepared for the worst, and early womanhood is the time to prepare.

The Girl Must Pay Her Debts

A woman, no less than a man, is in the grip of inexorable moral law, and each alike must pay to the uttermost farthing what he owes. A girl on the threshold of womanhood is in most cases a charming creature, and because of the chivalric devotion which is paid her she is in danger of losing sight of the demands of the eternal law. She must do her share of the world's work. She must begin in the home. She must pay her debts to her parents, and then to her brothers and sisters. Elder daughters can do for their younger sisters what no one else can do. Standing between their mother and these younger sisters, they can do much to bring both sides into closer sympathy. Because of their wider experience they can under-

stand their mother, and because of their youth they can enter more fully into the feelings and wishes of their younger sisters.

Sisters close together in age can help one another in ways that are numberless. There is opportunity for the development of a fellowship wondrously rich and delightful, and there is also a chance for torturing rivalries and heart-burnings.

For one's guidance in duty and consolation in tribulation, one must fall back on religion. Big girls no less than big boys need to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Both alike should seek first the kingdom of God. It is fashionable just now in many quarters to make light of religion. There are many who have outgrown the habit of church attendance, and who consider the Lord's day as a day set aside for social diversions and sumptuous

dinners. Even where the parents are faithful Christians, elder daughters often take the house into their own hands, laugh at their parents as old fogies, and trample upon their traditional customs and beliefs. This is not right. Daughters are under bonds to be patient and considerate. Insolence is always ugly, and disrespect to parents is always wrong. No one can be more cruel than a full-grown girl. When Shakespeare painted filial misconduct at its worst he painted the two daughters of King Lear.

Daughters need the inspiration and instruction of the Man of Galilee. He understood woman as no other man has ever understood her. He went out of his way to give her recognition. He protected her against the tyrants of his day. He announced principles which have broken her

shackles in many Christian lands. The finest of all his eulogies on human beings was pronounced upon a woman. He did for womankind what he could. No woman can entertain a higher or holier ambition than so to live as to win at last from his lips the benediction: "She hath done in her home, and in the church, and in society what she could!"

TO DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

"Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge."

RUTH i:16.

VII

TO DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

One of the most beautiful books in the Bible is the little book, Ruth. The book gets its name from the heroine of the story, one of the loveliest women mentioned in the Scriptures. The woman's whole soul comes out in her devotion to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi was a Jewess, and in the time of a great famine she and her husband and her two sons removed to the land of Moab. There her two sons married Moabitish girls. In time, the husband and both the sons died and Naomi, thus bereaved, decided to return to her native country. She could not expect her

daughters-in-law to return with her. Both girls were fond of her; but when the hour for decision came, only one of them was brave enough to follow her. In spite of the example of her sister-in-law, who turned back, Ruth refused to stay in Moab, saying, in words which are immortal: "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." It is worth remembering that the great-grandmother of David, and an ancestor of Jesus of Nazareth, stands forever before the world's eye as an ideal daughter-in-law. We know practically but one thing

about her—her deathless devotion to the mother of her husband.

Most Joked-About—Most Feared

There is a widespread impression that mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law do not get on well together. It is often assumed that there is in them a mutual and ineradicable antipathy. Many take it for granted that the daughter-in-law will invariably be set against the mother-in-law, and for reasons to be found in the mother-in-law's unlovely nature. There are circles in which "mother-in-law" has become a synonym for mischief-maker and tyrant. The mention of the word calls forth a sinister smile. A mother-in-law has become the most joked-about of all women, and the most feared.

But general impressions are often er-

roneous. The mother-in-law of popular fancy is a myth. It is not uncommon to find mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law bound together by ties of unusual admiration and affection. There are thousands of women who are proud of the girls their sons marry, and who love them with a love as genuine and deep as the love which they feel toward their own daughters. And there are thousands of daughters-in-law who love the mothers of their husbands with a devotion equal to that of Ruth, and who look up to them with a reverence and gratitude not a whit less than that which they feel toward their own mothers.

It must be confessed, however, that not all mothers-in-law are ideal. There are women who do not know how to behave toward their sons' wives, and when this

knowledge is lacking, there is sure to be trouble.

Some women are incorrigibly selfish. They do not know how to share homage with anyone else. They demand everything, and they demand it all the time. Because they have enjoyed their sons' undivided affection from their childhood, they insist on having it forever. When a girl wins the son's heart, the mother resents it as a wrong done to her. The girl is counted an intruder, an upstart, a usurper. Of course it is not difficult then to find defects in her. Jealous eyes can discern blemishes even when there are none.

Many a mother is convinced that the girl does not live who is good enough to be the wife of her son. To such a woman her son's wedding-day is a calamity. She cannot be happy even in the happiness of

her son. She is sure he will speedily repent his choice. She sees reasons every day why he ought to repent.

"Pitiless Eyes"

After the marriage, the bride's defects multiply. She does not know how to keep house. This is painfully evident to everybody, especially to the mother-in-law. Unfortunately, no woman is able to cook like a man's own mother, or to sew like her, or to keep house like her. When the first baby arrives, things become worse. The young mother does not know how to bring up children, and the disconsolate mother-in-law so informs all the neighbors. The whole household management is a bungle, and the mother-in-law eats her bread in tears. And so, also, does the daughter-in-law. Alas for the young mother who

is obliged to conduct her house and bring up her children under the pitiless eyes of a mother-in-law who does not like her!

Life is hard enough when the mother-in-law lives in the same town, but if both must live under the same roof then the situation becomes almost unendurable. All the conditions of purgatory are present when an ill-mated mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are obliged to live in the same house. A man and a woman cannot be the head of a house, much less can two women. Two women can give advice to a man, but not at the same time. There is room in a house for only one queen, and where it is not quite certain which is queen—the older woman or the younger one—all the days are sure to be clouded, and some will be lurid.

Whether a man is ever justified under

any circumstances in bringing his mother into his home as a permanent resident is a question often debated. Every woman instinctively wants a home of her own, and the thought of any person other than her husband in that home detracts from the glory of her dreams. She wants to be alone, at least in the earlier years of married life, and to have a third person always at the table, and a third person always at the fireside, is a prospect before which the heart of the young wife quails. What ought she to do? Ought she to refuse to have a third person introduced into the house?

No general rule can be given. Every case must be decided by itself. The ideal, of course, is that a man and a woman shall begin housekeeping alone. But the ideal is not always attainable. There are times

when the mother-in-law must be a member of the household, or else her son cannot marry at all. And sometimes the temperaments of mother and wife are such that happiness and peace are certain. It is not uncommon for a son and his mother to fall in love with the same girl at the same time. In this case it is no great hardship to give the mother a place at the family table.

Temperaments That Clash

But there are temperaments which seem foreordained to clash. There are mothers who are apparently incapable of living harmoniously with their sons' wives, no matter how hard they may strive, and in these cases it is folly to try an experiment which is well-nigh certain to end in disaster. It is sometimes better that a

man should not marry till after the death of his mother, rather than run the risk of marring the happiness of two women as well as his own. Sometimes the mother is aged and crotchety, in which case the temper even of an angel would be likely to be ruffled. Sometimes the mother is not aged, but simply cranky.

Now when a mother-in-law is a fool, she must be dealt with first of all by her son. If circumstances make it necessary for him to have his mother permanently in his home, then he owes it to his wife to have his mother keep her place. He must safeguard his wife against the petty tyrannies and usurpations which will make her life wretched. It is stated in the Bible that it is God's will that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. If his mother does not know this,

she must be instructed. If a man is going to cleave to his mother rather than to his wife, then he made a mistake in marrying at all. Having married, he owes it to his wife to safeguard her against the annoyances and irritations which an industrious mother-in-law is able to inflict.

Sometimes things are allowed to drift along year after year—everybody in the house miserable—when just a little frank talk would clear up the atmosphere and establish the life of the household upon a sounder and more endurable basis.

But the fault does not always lie with the mother-in-law. Daughters-in-law are not all paragons. Mothers-in-law have been obliged to suffer many things. Girls are a great trial unless they have a lot of common sense, especially to their husbands' mothers. Some girls start out

wrong, and with a wrong start it is difficult to set themselves right. They assume at the beginning that their mothers-in-law are their foes. They then make up their minds to have as little to do with them as possible. They imagine that they can get on perfectly well without them. They are interested only in their sons, and for the rest of the family they care nothing.

Sometimes the feeling goes further than indifference. They hold the husband's family in contempt. They sneer at its poverty, or its lack of culture, or its religious belief. This is a blunder. No man of sound feeling likes to have his family ignored or derided. No matter how dearly he loves a woman, there are certain strains to which his affection should never be subjected. He has a right to resent any disrespect shown to his parents, and

it is by a wife's showing reverence and affection for his parents that she wins a deeper and surer place in his heart.

Religious Snobbishness

Sometimes a girl is so bigoted that she cannot, even for a Sunday, worship God in a church in which her husband was reared. Mothers-in-law are not likely to be thankful when this sort of bigot is introduced into the family. A daughter-in-law is not expected to conform in all points to the beliefs and practices of her husband's people, but she should certainly be sufficiently well bred to treat with respect the beliefs and forms which her husband's people count sacred.

Young married women often create needless trouble for themselves by sheer heedlessness. They do not look ahead.

They do not realize that by their marriage two families have been brought into new relations to each other, and that in these new relationships lie unmeasured possibilities of happiness. A daughter-in-law owes it to herself, and to her husband, to come just as close to his family as they will let her come. By loving his father and mother and brothers and sisters, she will add new dimensions to her heart life, and not only increase her own joy but the joy, also, of all who are related to her.

A wife is sometimes jealous of her husband's family. She would be glad to have him sever relations with his parents in order that he might give himself more completely to her. This is asking the unreasonable. It is a good sign when the filial ties are tender and strong, and when a man remains loyal to his sisters.

For every problem of life nothing is so essential as common sense. Most of the trouble in the world could be avoided if people were only sensible. Sensible girls get on well, as a rule, with their husbands' mothers. But more than common sense is needed to solve the problems of a world like this. We cannot get on without religion. Home is never stable and ideal without love, and love is never at its best without religion—the belief that over all, and under all, and through all is a God of love—our heavenly Father.

The supreme exhortation of the Christian religion is that we become like God. Because he is long-suffering and forgiving and kind, we are to be all this also. Paul's exhortation is still needed: "I beseech you to walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one

another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

Domestic troubles are usually due to a lack of kindness and long-suffering. Ordinarily we do not have patience and forgiveness enough. A mother-in-law ought to be patient with her son's wife, and bear in mind that she is a younger woman and lacks experience, and will learn, and has had a different training, and cannot be expected to come up to the ideal which stands in the mother-in-law's mind, and, remembering all this, she ought to exercise forbearance, and cultivate the arts of overlooking and forgetting, and ought to make her feel that in her the daughter-in-law has a steadfast and affectionate friend.

Forbearance on Both Sides

And this forbearance is needed on both sides. A daughter-in-law, going into a strange family, should remember that she differs from her husband's mother as widely as her husband's mother differs from her, and that much depends on both of them subordinating themselves to each other, and that it is nearly always possible for one to make friends if one only shows herself friendly.

There is nothing more needed in a family than the use of the spiritual imagination. We must practice the art of putting ourself in the other person's place. When mothers-in-law put themselves in their daughters-in-law's places, and when daughters-in-law put themselves in their mothers-in-law's places, we shall have fewer do-

mestic tragedies. But suppose the mother-in-law is obdurate, and cannot be induced to be either sensible or Christian, what then? The daughter-in-law must, nevertheless, be a Christian. She must suffer long, and still be kind. She must bear all things and continue to hope all things, for this is the law of Christ. Let her think often of Ruth, the Moabitess, and say to the mother-in-law in the spirit, what Ruth said to hers: "The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me!"

TO GRANDPARENTS

"The faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois."

II Timothy i: 5.

VIII

TO GRANDPARENTS

THERE is only one grandmother mentioned in the New Testament—Lois. She was the mother of Eunice, and Eunice was the mother of Timothy. Timothy was the most beloved of the co-workers of Paul. When Paul lay in prison doomed to death, his thoughts turned constantly to Timothy. Paul expected Timothy to carry on his work after he was gone. He knew that terrific times lay ahead, and he was solicitous about Timothy. The young man was naturally diffident and timorous, and Paul feared he might lack the stamina necessary to cope with a desperate situation. The

one thing which gave Paul hope was the ancestry of Timothy. He had had a devout mother, and also a godly grandmother. With two noble women behind the man, high hopes for him are justifiable. From babyhood Timothy had breathed the atmosphere of religion. All his life he had been familiar with the holy writings. For years he had been taught the wisdom of Moses and the Prophets by his mother and grandmother, and later on Paul had instructed him in the truth as it is in Jesus. With such teachers there was solid reason to expect Timothy to conquer.

A clever writer has said that in order to produce a good man, we must begin with his grandparents. That is where God always begins. Every man is the creation of those who have preceded him. We carry in our veins not only the blood of

our parents, but the blood of their parents also. Our dispositions and beliefs are given to us by our parents, but our parents are largely what they are because of what was given to them. No matter how hard we try we cannot entirely escape from our grandparents. Their work upon us began before we were born, and their influence runs onward through the years.

This is the first thing for grandparents to remember; they are responsible in part not only for their children, but for their children's children. God gives every child two parents and four grandparents, expecting that at least one of the six will be faithful to him, and endeavor to keep alive in the heart of the child the spirit of faith and hope and love.

Loving Oversight and Care

Sometimes parents are neglectful of the religious education of their children. The father is absorbed in business: the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches are too much for him. The mother's chief concern is receptions and dinner parties and dress. It is in such cases that God falls back on the grandparents. Because of their mature age, they are less likely to be carried away by the forces which work mightily in the morning of middle life, and it is for them to give their grandchildren the religious encouragement and guidance which are denied them by their own father and mother. A multitude of God-fearing men and women would not be in the church to-day had it not been for the fidelity of some saintly old Lois

who kept a loving oversight over her grandchildren, and never ceased to build up in their hearts the principles of obedience and reverence and sacrifice.

To be sure, grandparents can carry their religious zeal too far. They can harp too much upon the Bible and church. Exhortations lose their force when too often repeated. It is always unwise to make one's self a bore. Grandparents can render religion odious by talking about it too often and in the wrong spirit. Boys cannot be religious in the same way as old men, nor can little girls manifest their religion in the forms which are most congenial to their grandmothers. It is foolish to try to make a boy like a man or a girl like a woman. God will not permit it. The Bible is an interesting book, and the church is a divine institution, and the truths

of Christianity are of great importance, but they must not be made a burden. Grandparents must not play all their music on one string.

Nor should they degenerate into chronic scolds. Their age gives them certain privileges, but to be meddlesome and bossy is not one of them. Children are unlike their grandparents in two particulars—they like noise, and they enjoy mischief. Grandparents must reconcile themselves to these two unchangeable facts. If they are everlastingly saying, "Don't," they lose their power to say, "Do." Children do not readily obey those who set themselves up as judges or spies. Grandparents must show themselves friendly, and the first ingredient of friendship is sympathy. Old folks must feel with the little folks, or the chasm between them will widen and

deepen. Warnings are sometimes in order, but if too frequent they become a nuisance. If grandmother sees nothing but danger, she needs to buy another pair of spectacles. When a grandparent begins to tell his grandchildren that boys and girls did not act so when he was a child, he has got off the road which leads to life. Of course boys and girls do not act now as children acted fifty years ago. How could they? The whole world has changed many times within the last half century, and boys and girls have changed along with everybody else. It is not wise for a grandmother to set herself up as a paragon of feminine virtue, saying to her grandchildren constantly, "I never did such a thing when I was a girl," for it is irritating to have perfection always flaunted in one's face, and one resents being measured by a standard

which one has never seen. A child has a right to question the flawless conduct of the grandparents in the days of their youth, when in their old age they give daily exhibitions of the lack of even ordinary wisdom. If people are foolish enough to scold and to boast when they are old, what must they have been guilty of when they were young?

The Duty of Cheerfulness

Grumpiness is a devil which sometimes gets into people who are no longer young, and it must be exorcised at all costs. Grandparents, because they have passed noon, often find themselves in possession of a number of physical ailments about which they are prone to speak. Such matters should never be brought to the attention of children. Aches and pains are

things to be kept out of sight. It is bad manners to bring them to the dinner table, and if children are present it is wicked. There are too many bright and lovely things to talk about, to squander time in conversing about things which are dismal and depressing. If old folks persist in moaning, then young folks will flee from them as from a plague.

Instead of grandparents scolding and moaning and acting the part of policemen, let them aim always to be comforters. Children have innumerable tribulations and sorrows, and they need again and again consolation. The grandfather's heart should be a house of refuge for every grandchild in distress. When everyone else has forsaken her, a grandchild ought to feel that her grandmother will take her up. Fathers and mothers are often too busy to give

their children the comfort which they crave, but grandparents are granted more abundant leisure in order that they may give solace to hearts that are wounded, and speak words of good cheer to spirits which are sad. What greater joy can a grandparent know than the joy of feeling that his grandchildren will bring to him all their perplexities and troubles.

Grandparents are also by the grace of God peacemakers. There is always room for peacemakers in a world like this. In every home there are clashes, sometimes collisions. Human beings cannot live close together without friction, and out of friction come quarrels. Blessed is the home that has in it a gray-haired peacemaker, a man or woman who always seeks the things which make for peace. Parents and their children sometimes quarrel, and

brothers and sisters are certain at times to fall into strife. We come into the world with a deal of combustible material in us, and there is need of someone near who can put out the fire. Like Christ himself the grandparent ought to be able to say to the agitated and bitter-hearted combatants: "My peace I give unto you!"

Young and Old Companions

But in order to be comforter and peacemaker, the grandparents must make themselves agreeable companions. An old person is naturally interesting to a child, more fascinating than any younger person. A bald head is endlessly entertaining to a boy. Gray hairs have an awing influence on the youthful heart. Children instinctively look up to those upon whom the years have

left their mark. Wrinkles are not repulsive to a child, but attractive. He looks with reverence upon a face so different from his own.

And children love to talk with old people, provided the old people only know how to talk. A child assumes that a person who is old knows everything, and he is therefore ready to listen to his words as though they were the oracles of God. Grandpa may be only fifty, but to a boy of four he is as old as Methuselah and as wise. His life runs back into the past farther than the age of Homer. It reaches back to the age of gold. When a grandfather tells his grandchildren about things that happened when he was a boy, he talks to them about something as interesting as fairyland. No healthy boy or girl ever gets weary of stories. It is therefore the duty of

grandparents to have a lot of them. They should see to it that their stock never runs low. Parents cannot possibly tell their children enough stories to satisfy them, and that is one of the reasons why God has furnished four grandparents. He wants them to increase the sum of human happiness by telling stories. A grandfather who cannot tell stories is worse than a heathen man and a publican. A grandmother who is not acquainted with all the fairies and goblins and giants and witches is a grandmother who has failed to prepare herself for one of the most important duties of life. If children push old folks into a corner and leave them there it is because the old folks are not interesting. It is their duty to brighten up the corner, and make it so radiant that the children will hilariously rush into it.

If one or more of the grandparents live with their children and grandchildren, then it becomes them to remember that they are grandparents. If this is forgotten, as it sometimes is, the sky of that home is darkened. If the grandparents live in some other part of the town, or out in the country, or in some far away city, then plans must be made for regular visits. The grandchildren must visit their grandparents. These visits should be great and memorable events. The grandparents must prepare for them days in advance. There must be a plentiful supply of good things to eat, and ever so many good stories, and not a few new games. Children live largely in the world of the senses, and whatever appeals to the senses increases their joy. There are men and women who remember yet with a thrill of delight the good times

they had years ago in visiting their grandparents.

Many Ideal Grandparents

Let us be thankful that there are so many ideal grandparents in the world. When a grandfather or a grandmother is surly or stiff, we are shocked, and resent it as though a great wrong had been done to the world. When God made his big world-plan he put in grandparents as a very important feature, and there are multitudes of grandparents who fulfill the expectations of their Creator. They love their grandchildren with a love which is as warm and genuine as that with which they loved their own children. They find their supreme delight in making their grandchildren happy. And verily they have their reward. Children give us more than

we can possibly give them. They give us warmth. Upon the altars of their hearts the fire burns briskly, and the world would be cold indeed without them. They furnish light. In their sparkling eyes, God shines most manifestly. They add a splendor to the world, and keep alive in us our capacity for hope. God gives us children to cheer us as we travel up the eastern slope of the hill, and he gives us grandchildren to hearten us as we travel down the slope toward the west.

Happy is the man who can look back to his childhood and see gazing upon him from the clouds of memory the dear face of a sainted Lois. To many of us such a vision is a priceless possession. The mention of her name acts upon us like enchantment. It calls up the scenes of vanished years. Again we hear her voice,

we see the twinkle in her eye, we listen again to that thrilling story which she told us more than a hundred times, again we are seated at her table, devouring the good things which only she knew how to provide. Blessed woman, gift of God, dead years ago, and yet alive in hearts which cannot forget her! What worthier ambition can a man or woman have than to be so kind and hospitable and interesting as to live, a fountain of cheer and comfort, in the hearts not only of his children, but also of his children's children!

TO MASTERS AND SERVANTS

"Servants, ye serve the Lord Christ."

COL. iii : 24.

"Masters, ye also have a Master in heaven."

COL. iv : 1.

IX

TO MASTERS AND SERVANTS

When Paul talks to the family he never overlooks the servants. The relation of master to servant is one of the most important of all social relations, and the christian religion has much to say about it. It is interesting to note that Paul in his letter to the Colossians devotes nearly twice as much space to the duties of masters and servants as he gives to the duties of husbands and wives and of parents and children. There were special reasons for this amplitude and emphasis. The new religion had raised many puzzling questions, and none of them was more baffling than those which sprang out of the relation of the slave to his master. Slavery was a firmly

established institution of the ancient world. In Paul's day the majority of church members were in many cities slaves. We can easily imagine the questions which arose in their mind as they listened to Paul's doctrine of liberty and heard him emphasize the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. He did not hesitate to say: "In Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free." But what did this mean? Did it mean that slaves were no longer obliged to serve their masters, and were all men hereafter to live on a plane of absolute equality? Had the old distinction between superior and inferior been obliterated, and had the time arrived when every man was free to do what he chose?

Slavery has vanished, but the old problem remains. The relation of employer to employé, of master to servant, of su-

perior to inferior still abides, and will abide as long as men live upon the earth. Each succeeding generation must wrestle with the problem which Paul faced nineteen hundred years ago. The questions which pressed upon his mind are still perplexing and urgent.

The spirit of democracy is abroad, and the ideas of liberty and equality and fraternity are in the air. Differences in social conditions are irritating, and the yoke of hired service is one which is increasingly galling. Everybody nowadays thinks he is as good as everybody else—if not better. Everybody wants to be boss. Differences in rank are considered survivals of ancient tyrannies, and subordination is counted degrading. The servant class is in a mood not unlike that of the slaves in the time of the apostles. A fresh vision

of liberty and equality has led to mental confusion and great disquiet of heart. The wage-earning classes are everywhere more or less sullen and disgruntled. Labor and capital glare at each other out of suspicious and hostile eyes. Employers and employés have frequent quarrels. Masters think that servants are lazy and unreasonable, and servants think that masters are tyrannical and greedy. It is not easy for an American to work under the commands and for the profit of another. The industrial unrest meets us in our homes. The servant problem has become one of the most critical and tormenting of all our problems, and one frequently hears the exclamation—"I do not know what we are going to do!"

Paul's advice to servants is beautifully sane. His first word for them is "Obey."

They are to do what they are told to do. They are to think first not of their rights, but of their duties. It is only when we do our duties that we are likely to secure our rights. He exhorts them to do their work conscientiously. It is fundamentally the Lord's work, and the work ought to be done in a way which will please him. It is a besetting sin of the servant class to scamp their work. Many work only while somebody's eyes are on them. They do no more than is likely to be observed and paid for. This is a mistaken principle on which to work. Christ has eyes which are ever on us. He sees what we do. He knows what we leave undone. We ought to do all our work in the consciousness that he sees and knows and cares.

And then the work ought to be done with enthusiasm. We ought to put heart into

what we do. He who does anything languidly does it poorly. We make progress only in the work we like to do, and the only work we like to do is work into which we put our mind and heart. A servant who aims to do as little as possible is certain to be unhappy, because he is breaking one of the cardinal laws of life. Only those are happy who strive to do their best. The work of a servant becomes galling drudgery unless it is done from the heart. The moment a human being becomes a machine, doing mechanically solely what he is told to do, making no effort to do it better than it was done before, and with no desire to please either God or man, he loses out of his life the very thing which makes life worth living.

Servants should therefore often remind themselves that all good work is certain to

be rewarded. Their material reward may be scanty, but their spiritual reward will be generous and sure. No man or woman in God's universe ever labors in vain. Every bit of fine work is recognized in heaven. Servants are sons and daughters of God and their Heavenly Father never forgets them. They are heirs of the kingdom, and if faithful they receive the "recompense of the inheritance." In this respect they are on a level with their employers. There is no notice taken of social distinctions by God. Whether the woman is in the parlor or the kitchen, she is rewarded according to her deeds. The cook or the chambermaid may fail to elicit a word of commendation from the woman she works for, but if the work is done with fidelity she is certain of God's "well done!"

At this point Paul is careful to remind

servants that for them the law of retribution also holds. "He that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done." The lazy servant, the servant which scamps her work, the servant which defrauds his master by taking money for work he has never done, the servant who insolently assumes that it is proper for him to take advantage of his employer as often as he can, cannot possibly escape the condemnation of the Great Judge. There is no respect of persons with him. He is just as strict with poor people as he is with rich people. He is not a whit more lenient with wage-earners than he is with employers. He is not partial to servants and rigorously just with masters. No servant will ever be excused for shirking his duty. Both master and servant stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

What Paul says to masters is compressed into a single sentence, but it is one of the most pregnant and opulent sentences in the Bible. "Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." What more could be said? He lays down no specific rules. He announces the broad principles of justice and fairmindedness. But how difficult it is to be just! It is easier to be charitable than to be just. Even if one is disposed to mete out justice, it is not easy at all times to determine what justice is. In our complicated modern world, there is nothing more difficult than to decide what is a just financial recompense for work done. Masters are to give what is just and also what is equal, or equitable or fair. And to do this is even more difficult than to do justice. It is possible to lay

down rules in regard to what is just, but what is fair is beyond the reach of rules. Servants are to be treated fairly. The master cannot excuse himself by saying he has complied with the requirements of the civil law. He cannot escape by saying that he has done all that is customary, or that he has done fully as much as his neighbors. He is under bonds to do that which is fair. It may be that custom is not fair, and it is quite likely that many of his neighbors do not know what fairness is, but every employer is expected by the Lord of heaven to deal fairly with those who work for him. The Golden Rule should be often before his eyes, and he should pray unceasingly that he may have more and more the mind of Christ. The financial bond between him and his servants is not the only bond. There are other bonds deeper and more sacred.

A Master has not done his duty to his servants simply by paying them their monthly wages. They are human beings, and they cannot live by bread alone. He owes them courtesy. Paul in writing to masters in Ephesus urged them to forbear threatening. By this he meant harsh and boorish speech. There are men, and women too, who do not seem to be able to speak to servants in the tones of gentle breeding. They take it for granted that it is their privilege to speak to them brusquely and petulantly. Superiors often have a lordly way of addressing their alleged inferiors, and even christian men and women sometimes give exhibitions of temper before their servants of which they could not be guilty in the presence of those whom they deem their equals. Our disposition is nowhere more clearly disclosed than in our

attitude to those we think below us. It is here that the christian spirit is most certainly revealed. A man cannot tell how genuine a christian he is by his behavior to those who are above him or to those who are around him. His christianity is made manifest in his dealings with those below him. You can tell much of a woman by the way in which she treats her husband and her children, you can tell more by the way in which she treats her servants.

We owe our servants consideration. We should think of their needs and also of their wants. We who have the free disposal of all our time should remember that time is also dear to others, and that by shortening the hours whenever we can, and by giving a day off now and then when possible, and by granting a week's or two weeks' vacation in the summer, we are only

doing to others what we should be very happy to have others do to us, if we were domestic servants. Not all masters and mistresses give attention to the rooms in which their servants sleep, or to the beds on which they lie, or to the rooms in which they sit after the day's work is over. If servants are crowded into narrow rooms in the attic or cellar, half cooked in summer and half frozen in winter, sleeping on mattresses scarcely good enough for a dog, with no place to sit down in except the pantry or kitchen, we need not wonder that there is a servant problem on our hands.

Sympathy is also a part of fair dealing. Servants, being human, have their aches and pains, their disappointments and discouragements and despondencies. They lose father, mother, brothers, sisters. They need consolation, encouragement, inspira-

tion. These they do not always receive. Christian masters should not forget that sympathy with those below us is as important as with those above us.

If servants were more frequently commended, they would take greater pains to please. People who are habitually found fault with gradually lose heart. To criticise domestic servants is easy; to praise them is hard. But praise is sometimes worth more than money. Many a servant would work with new heart and hope if the people for whom she is working would now and then bestow a word of cordial appreciation.

Here then is the only solution for the servant problem. Servants cannot be compelled to do their duty by legislation, nor can masters. Nothing but the spirit of Christ is equal to the problems of the

home. Servants must come up to a higher level. They must look upon their work as appointed by God. All useful work is honorable. Every position when faithfully filled is ennobling. The world cannot get on without the performance of the work which servants do. It is a part of the divine order. The position then of a household servant is sacred. He holds his place for the glory of God. He that is faithful in a little is faithful also in much. It is better to fill an inferior position in a superior way than a superior position unworthily. Obedience is not degrading, submission is not disgraceful. Paul was not afraid of the word slave. It was his favorite word for describing his relation to Jesus Christ. He did not hesitate to apply it even to Jesus himself. It thrilled him to think that the Prince of Glory took upon him the

form of a servant. Jesus glorified servantship. He was willing to use the basin and towel. He warned his disciples against the love of authority, and declared that he himself had come into the world not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for others. What servants need most of all is a vision of God in Christ.

Masters need the same vision. High position spoils men, and so does authority, and so does money, unless the heart is fixed on God. Through Christ a master can do everything. He can be patient with his servants. He can sympathize with them, and help them. He can suffer long with them and still be kind. He can look upon them as a sacred trust for which he is to render account on the Day of Judgment. The position men hold on the earth is but for

a moment. Master and servant they are today, but tomorrow they are dust, and the spirit of each returns to the God who gave it. He who is the Master of them both is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

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